

Title of Project: **JUVENILE ANTI SOCIAL
BEHAVIOUR PROJECT**

Category: **Crime and Disorder Reduction**

Force: **North Wales Police Force**

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OBJECTIVES OF THE JUVENILE ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PROJECT

The aim in simplistic terms of this project is to reduce the number of incidents of Juvenile anti-social behaviour within the County of Wrexham.

By doing this we would also improve the quality of living within for the communities that we serve; and long term; this project would reduce crime within Wrexham; as a result of diverting the youths involved in the anti social behaviour, from a possible future in crime.

When we set out on the project, our success was to be measured by the reduced number of calls to the control room, from the public, and complaints received at various Oabfic consultations groups, such as PCCG, Community Councils etc.

Another success criteria we set ourselves, was to see the number of youths who continued in this anti-social behaviour manner; when the individual was first reported; being reduced, and continue to reduce as each level was passed.

Another success criteria, was to see a reduction in the number of evictions of Local Housing Authority Tenants, due to the anti-social behaviour of the parents' children, which would be a breach of the tenancy agreement. Prior to the project a number of evictions were due to the children's behaviour.

Finally we decided that a failure criteria would in fact be that we had to resort to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order to control a juvenile, as this would mean that we had not been able to do this by working in partnership, to divert a youth from their anti-social behaviour.

THE RESEARCH

Scanning:

Juvenile Anti-Social behaviour, is a well-documented problem, both locally and nationally, and Wrexham is no different. When we devised this project, we Scanned the Police Operational Information System (O.I.S.), which revealed the first problem; as we did not record Juvenile Anti-Social Behaviour as a specific category. Instead both Adult and Juvenile Anti-Social Behaviour were combined under one category. We therefore had to then rely on the feed back from other sources, like PCCG, Community Councils, and Police officers; to support the 'gut feeling' that this was a major problem.

Analysis of the information we obtained from the various sources, showed us that about 20% of all calls taken by our control room staff, were in relation to Juvenile Anti-Social Behaviour. This was a major drain on a limited resource, and although only relatively minor in the scale of activities that the Police deal with, it takes officers away from the more core functions, such as crime.

From all our previous consultation with the communities we serve, it became quite clear, that although we might not class this as a major problem, the communities did, and felt that we needed to take positive action against this type of behaviour. Many people fear this type of activity more than they do Burglary and robbery, and that it has a major effect on peoples' day to day life, and greatly increases the 'fear of crime'.

Analysis:

As has been stated earlier, the major problem we had when doing the research into the problem, was that we could not obtain specific figures, as we could not split the calls about anti-social behaviour between, Adults and Juvenile.

Since starting this project, we took steps to remedy this problem, by getting our Control Room Supervisors to close off any incident-involving Juvenile Anti Social Behaviour, under a specific code. This has given us the means, to measure the problem.

We therefore started off by using figures from the past 3 years, leading up to the official start of the project in 1st January 2040 which showed us that the number of incidents was increasing, see Annex A fig 1 to Ollis report. These figures confirmed that this is a countywide problem, as our 'soft' research showed.

This indicated that we needed to run this Project County wide, so as to tackle the whole problem. It was not a problem that we could tackle in just one or two areas.

When analysing the problem, we could not pick up any threads as to why this was occurring, as there was very little information available as to the causation factors. There were numerous theories as to why, but no one theory that would give you something to try and alter, apart from, the juveniles had nothing else to do. This was the main theme that came from talking to youth workers, the juveniles and other interested parties.

From a police officers perspective, the officers would say, 'what can we do about it, apart from move them on'. With this in mind we realised that we needed to come up with something that was structured, so officers could see they could do something, and that would give the juveniles who persisted in this activity, something to do.

During this phase we involved Local Authorities, and also brought in the then forming North East Wales Youth Offending team, to look at the problem, to analyse it, and to work together on the solution.

In the end, between hard facts, soft information, and 'gut feelings', we could see that Juvenile Anti Social Behaviour, was a problem in Wrexham; that needed to be tackled, if we were to improve the quality of life of the Communities we serve, and to allow the police to deal with more core activities.

THE SOLUTION - RESPONSE

The Thought Process:

When considering possible solutions to this problem it was evident from our analysis of the problem at the beginning, that whatever solution we finally adopted, it would need to have a multi-agency approach. The solution was a lot more than just moving the youths on, we needed to devise a process that looked at all three sides of the Problem Orientated triangle - Victim/Offender/Location, instead of the traditional Police method of dealing with the Offender.

Traditionally, the Police seem to deal in fire brigade policing, namely, attending at an incident and dealing with it (putting out the fire) and leaving, and returning at a later time/date and repeating the process. Our analysis showed that to be effective, we need to deal with the whole problem including the causes. So we needed a process that allowed us to look at the causes, and try and find solutions long term, through partnership working, using the information provided by this process.

We realised as we reviewed possible solutions, that whatever solution we opted for, needed to be something that did not require the Police or Local Authority Staff (officers), to be involved in lengthy paper work, and confrontation with offenders or victims, was kept to a minimal.

The process on the street needed to be simple, and would not require front line officers to know an individual's previous anti social behaviour history; but it did need to be robust, and delivered the same by all front line officers.

We also needed to ensure that the alleged offender was protected from false accusations as a result of a malicious call or the 'Victor Mildrew' characters.

Whatever process we selected, it had to be something that we could use across the County to ensure that we treated all juveniles in a consistent manner, and that we could deal with an individual youth, no matter where the youth caused a problem within the County, as they do tend to move around the County.

As we had identified gaps in our initial information, the process needed to be able to help fill these gaps in, by recording information, like location of incident, and home address, to see if youths are committing offences in their own area or travelled to commit offences.

We looked around to see how others had tackled this problem, and found a scheme that had been tried in various shapes over the years, but had no structure or standardisation.

We took this process as a starting point, and adapted and developed it, to give our front line officers a standard procedure at the point of the incident, and then was administered at a central point. It is at this central point that we carried out the various procedures depending on the number of incidents and individual had been involved in. This allowed the procedure at the incident to always be dealt with in a consistent manner, making it easier for the officers.

Before we confirmed the system, we spoke with Police Officers, Local Authority Officers, Y.O.T. Team Officers, and Youth Workers, to ensure that the system would:

- (a) work
- (b) was deliverable
- (c) was acceptable to those who worked with the youths

The Juvenile Anti Social Behaviour Policy - The Procedure:

As has been explained earlier, we opted for a process which required the officer, to be able to evidence the anti social behaviour, to a Criminal Burden of Proof.

This was decided, because at the time, there were many arguments going on within the legal system, as to whether an application for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order was Criminal or Civil (as stated in the Act), and any evidence we recorded may be required to support an application for such an order. Also this would help protect the alleged offender(s) from a malicious complaint.

The process required the officer on evidencing that a person(s) had committed anti-social behaviour, to record the person's personal details, names, school, etc.

The officer is then required to warn the person(s) about their behaviour, and that their names would be entered onto a database at Wrexham Police Station and that we may be contacting their parents/guardians.

The officer would then complete a form, which includes details of the complaint, actions taken by the officer, and the offenders details (see annex B). This is then forwarded to the Community safety Department, and logged on the Juvenile database (this is registered under the Data Protection Act).

If this is the first time a juvenile's name is inputted, then no further action is taken, if it is the second incident involving the juvenile, then a letter is sent out to the parent's/guardians, informing them of their child's conduct, and reminding them of their legal obligations (see annex C). This letter has resulted in a number of parents phoning the Community Safety Department, and asking about their child's action, and fully supporting the Police action. A copy of this letter is also sent to the Youth Offending Team, and the Local Authority Housing Department (if living in L.A. Housing), for both organisation's information.

When a third incident is recorded, then the local Inspector is contacted, and asked to send a Community Safety Officer to visit the family, to discuss the juvenile's behaviour with the parents and the juvenile. This is done in order to try and deter the juvenile from further Anti Social behaviour, and to get the individual to understand why this action has been taken. The Youth Offending Team also sends a team member to the family address separately; to try and see how they can work with the individual, and family, to change their behaviour.

If we then get to a fourth incident within 6 months of the first, then the Police call what is termed a 'Juvenile Review Panel' ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

This consists of Police, YOT, Local Authority Housing, Social Services, Education Social Worker, Headmaster or Teacher, and any other person from both Statutory or Voluntary organisations, who it is felt can offer evidence about the individual's behaviour, or assist in deterring further incidents.

During this review, the group will listen to the evidence available, and then discuss how we can work together to change the individual's actions. The meeting is fully minuted, and an Action Plan is agreed at the meeting (see annex D for an example).

Implementation:

Once we had devised the process in late 1999, we then arranged to make various presentations to interested groups, including County Councillors, Community Councillors, Divisional Police Officers, and also took the presentation to the Wrexham Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy Group, to gain their support for the process.

We ensured that the officers who were to implement this process were fully briefed on the process, and that they had the paper work available, to ensure they could implement it with out any hold ups. We did this by posting the forms on the Police E-Mail system.

We planned the briefing process so that by the 1st January 2000, all the practitioners would be fully aware of the process, and we also piloted the process, to ensure that the theory actually worked in practice.

We realised that it was important to ensure that as wide an audience as possible was briefed on this process, so that both practitioners and non-practitioners fully understood the process, and particularly it's limitations, in that we need to evidence the behaviour. In talking to people during the research, we realised that this point would be hardest to get across to many; but in the end, we have been able to sell the product effectively.

Short Term Results:

As a result of implementing this Process at the start of 2000, the first positive feed back was from the local communities who saw the Police taking a positive action with these juveniles.

1 The officers themselves looked on this as a positive step, and could see the benefits from the scheme, and therefore started to submit forms, and to deal with the youths fairly, but firmly.

There was also some very positive feed back from our partners, including the Out Reach workers, who saw the benefits of the scheme.

As the process continued, we also saw the numbers drop from first offence, to those going onto commit a second offence, which it was hoped was as a result of positive action by officers, when dealing with the first incident.

Ownership:

In order to gain the trust of officers from both the Police and Council and the YOT team, and to get them to accept ownership of this process, we involved them in all the stages of the development of the process.

We also consulted them on how best to deal with the problem, and got all the partners agreement to support and drive this forward, so that this was not seen as an idea thought up by some one in the `ivory tower', but that it was a team effort in the widest sense.

Since the process has been running, we give staff feed back on the results, and involve them in the Juvenile Review Panels, and welcome them, requesting information on `problem' youths in their area, who are on the database.

t The Youth Offending Team, have welcomed this scheme from it's concept, as it gives them a major source of back ground information on many of their clients who progress from Anti-Social behaviour to crime. The concept is also a major tool to help them in one of their own priorities, Preventing Crime, as they, as we do, believe if we can deter youths from further Anti-Social Behaviour, they are less likely to move onto committing crime. An expression used is that `anti-social behaviour is the kinder garden of crime'.

Costings:

1 From previous Force audits, we were aware that the cost of dealing with Anti Social Behaviour is £205.00 per incident. Unfortunately it has not been possible to cost the real cost of this process at present.

From discussions with officers who deal with these incidents, the new procedures are no more time consuming than previous methods, but they now feel they are having a more positive effect.

1 In order to be effective in this process we required two initial resources, the officers to attend at the incident, and an administrator. We have always responded to these incidents, so we had the resources to deal with the incidents, and if effective, the resource would be needed less.

1 The administration of the database was a new resource, and it was decided to utilise an officer on light duties to run the database, amongst other duties. This was a positive step, as it gave the officer a worth while role to carry out, and aided the officers recovery, which was therefore a saving for the Force.

1 The administration of the database has now moved into the recently formed help desk, and has become one of their roles, thus allowing the database to be maintained at no extra expense to the Force.

The real cost for the process is in the Juvenile Review Panels, as they involve a number of people. There is a need to cost this out in the future, but when we look at the results of these panels, I feel that we are justified in this expense, as to date we have only required one Anti Social Behaviour Order out of the 22 youths who have committed 4 or more offences.

The Difficulties:

- * Lack of precise information - as stated earlier, the information available initially was limited. As a result we have set in place a system of identifying Juvenile Anti Social Behaviour, and can now capture that information
- * Getting the trust of the youths - we soon identified a distrust with the youths, as they did not understand what we were trying to do. We over came this through help from the Youth Offending Team, and Out Reach Workers, who worked in conjunction with Community Beat Officers, to explain the process to the youths, and to explain about anti social behaviour.
- * Getting structure to the review panels - when we held the first panel, as we had no experience in this. type of activity, there was a lack of structure. We were aware of what we wanted to achieve, but weren't clear how to run the panel. As a result of discussion, and talking to agencies like the Family Protection Unit, we adopted their systems, and now the reviews are very structured, and come up with positive action plans.
- * Evidencing incidents - this is probably the hardest part of the process to achieve, and in order to achieve this we are trying to get officers to attend at the location earlier, so they have more time to witness the incident. We are also speaking to complainants to assess their evidence, and using that if it is practical.

Review methods:

Initially, all forms came through the Community Safety Inspector, to ensure that there was a reasonable standard of evidence, and that the complaint was in fact Anti Social Behaviour and not a crime. It was agreed from the outset, that we should ensure there was a constant standard of evidence across the County. The officer who runs the database now carries out this review process.

A regular check is made of the OIS incidents, and a check is made of the entries to ensure that officers are dealing with these incidents in the correct manner, to ensure a constant approach across the County. We also keep records of which stations are submitting forms, to ensure that all areas within the County are dealt with in the same way. The numbers reflect the populations in the areas, and the number of incidents of juvenile Anti Social behaviour in those areas. At one stage we did note a drop. in forms in relation to incidents, and this was corrected by a renewed drive of the initiative, and the percentage of forms to incidents returned to the earlier levels.

Regular checks are also made with the community Councils, to ensure that they are happy with the procedures, as they are usually the points of contact for the local communities, if there is a problem.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE? - ASSESSMENT

The aim of the project was to reduce the number of calls received in the Police Control room, by reducing the number of incidents of juvenile Anti Social Behaviour. The figures displayed on annex A fig 1 indicates that we have seen:a drop of 1734 calls in the year 2000, compared with 1999.

The reader will notice from the figures in Annex A, show that there has been a reduction across the County in 2000, compared with the 1999 figures, indicating no displacement of the problem.

This indicates that we have been successful in our main aim. This is also supported by the figures of the number of youths who were recorded on the Database, again as shown on Annex A fig 2. We have seen a drop from 1562 names recorded for one incident, to 72 (4.6%) for a second, and down to 22 (1.9%) for a 4th incident.

These figures show that the initial action taken by the officers on first contact with the juveniles seems to have a positive effect, and deters the youths from continuing to cause Anti Social Behaviour. Having said this, the project will probably not be the only reason names have not come up a second time, but it does support our belief that this process is having a positive effect.

The drops between each stage demonstrate that the different actions taken are having a positive effect, including the Review Panel. To date as stated earlier, we have only had to resort to one successful application for an Anti Social Behaviour Order in July 2000, having been able to change the behaviour of the other youths, through successful partnership working.

At present utilising the above figures is our only factual method of evaluating the success of this project. We can further support these facts with the soft information achieved by speaking to the consultation groups; and will be further evaluated, once the forthcoming Crime and Disorder Audit is completed. To evaluate costs, we will need to wait till the Force carries out its next 'Cost of Crime' audit, and then compare the cost of dealing with Anti Social Behaviour.

THE FUTURE

We consider on the basic information, that this project is a success. As a result we have now extended the project to Flintshire, a second County that we now are covering, as a result of Divisional mergers, and this is proving successful there as well.

Other Divisions within North Wales Police are also looking at utilising the process, and interest from outside the Force has also been expressed.

As a result of the success, we have now taken the scheme into two further phases in the last couple of months. The first is a direct link with the Youth Service, and we are going to include a leaflet about their activities, and contact numbers, with the letter sent to Parents, to offer them support with their children. As part of this link, we are now forwarding any P.O.P. packages we develop relating to problem areas associated with youths; to facilitate engagement with the youths involved (locational work)

In conjunction with the Youth Service, Local College and the Arts Council, we are developing a drama production using youth Anti Social Behaviour as the focus, and then there will be follow up sessions, which will be used to discuss the outcomes. This is to be offered to Secondary Schools prior to the forthcoming Summer Recess, free of charge due to sponsorship.

Information gathered through this project is also used to help local officers dealing with local POP packages associated with Juvenile nuisance.

CONCLUSION

Although this locally developed Problem Orientated Policing package has been running for a year, it is having a positive effect on a problem that blights all society. We are not expecting a quick fix, as this is just one solution; but it deals with the Division as a complete area to ensure a common approach to the problem. The project supports, and is supported by local POPs dealing with the problems associated with juvenile Anti Social Behaviour, that we are not able to evidence, giving us a holistic approach to the problem; and most importantly, improving the standard of living of the communities we all serve.

Figure 1

Anti Social Figures for Wrexham from calls to the Control Room.

Location/Year	1997	1998	1999	2000
WR1	2958	3255	3100	2219
WR2	639	680	718	619
WR3	723	709	895	698
WR4	132	150	153	100
WR5	331	409	416	366
WR6	73	86	65	68
WR7	836	857	820	460
WR8	124	140	155	114
WR9	187	204	142	86
GRAND TOTAL	6003	6490	6464 *	4730

* slight drop may be due to the pilots of the scheme at the end of the year?

* the reduction for the first year of the project over the 1999 figure is 26.8%, a theoretical saving to North Wales Police of £181,272.00 (1734 [incidents less] x £104 [cost of Police attending incidents]). If the same scheme is adopted across the Force, we would have saved £552,080.00 (£2,060,000 [cost to NWP of Anti Social Behaviour for a year] x 26.8%)

Figure 2

Juvenile report Statistics for 2000/2001

Single reports	1562 juveniles	% of single reports figure
Two reports	72 juveniles	4.6%
Three reports	36 juveniles	2.43%
Four reports	22 juveniles	1.98%